



Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary Management Plan Review
Public Scoping Meeting Comments

Oct. 3, 2008

6 – 9 p.m.

Westport Maritime Museum, Westport, WA

In all, 29 people attended the meeting (excluding sanctuary staff). Meeting attendees were divided into four discussion groups. Each group was facilitated by a sanctuary staff member. An additional staff member served as note-taker in three of the groups; in one group, the facilitator also served as note-taker. Discussion groups sat around tables facing projected Microsoft Word blank document pages. Facilitators each asked their groups, “what should be Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary’s priorities for the next 5 to 10 years? Note-takers typed each group member’s comments so that the entire group could see them. Facilitators checked in with each participant to verify that his/her typed comments were accurate; the participants could then request changes to the wording. Here are the responses from each group.

Group #1

Facilitator/Note-taker: Bob Steelquist

- Clean up seafloor: crab pots, vehicles, containers, tires
- Enough protection without sanctuary – do prevent oil drilling
- No justification for sanctuary
- Faster or more readily available spill response equipment (cleanup)
- Ocean fisheries are being depleted – more research and regulation on fish stocks. More current stock data. Sanctuary should be an area of more intense study.
- Beach cleanup. Problem is year-round, not just once a year effort. Sanctuary should publicize and help coordinate.
- Water pollution from land ends up in ocean. Sanctuary should do more work preventing pesticides, chemicals, human waste from reaching the ocean.
- Research on fish biomass should be provided to regulators.
- Research on predator biomass: seals, sea lions, pelicans.
- Make funding available to organizations that conduct water quality testing. Example: Surfrider program for testing water quality.
- Harbors of Refuge: Need two on Washington Coast between Grays Harbor and Neah Bay.
- More research on indicators of ocean health. Examples: eelgrass, kelp forests, reefs.

- Sanctuary should retain policy of not being involved with fisheries management.
- Minimum expenditure of federal money (underline 12x)
- Combine some groups to eliminate duplication of efforts.
- Develop programs for taking kids out on to the ocean.
- Collaborate with universities for research. Especially ships and ship time.

Group #2

Facilitator: George Galasso

Note-taker: Mike Murray

- Concerned about federal offshore oil and gas moratorium being lifted.
- Concerned about wind and wave turbines. The sanctuary should research the impacts of these projects, and understand impacts to users.
- Wind/wave energy projects: concerned about effects on nutrient flows, and effects to sand flow. The sanctuary should address this.
- Grayland fishermen do not want to see offshore wind turbines.
- Concerned about potential loss of area access from wind/wave energy projects.
- Concerned about low military overflights (have experienced this).
- Concerned about Navy activity within the Sanctuary (air and sea, including sonar).
- The sanctuary should partner and collaborate with Marine Resource Committees (e.g., Grays Harbor MRC).
- Would like public access to sanctuary's maps (e.g., bottom habitats). Would like improved charting for navigation safety. Suggest using sanctuary data to improve National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) charts.
- Would like to see an educational/visitors center ("south coast discovery center") developed by the sanctuary in Westport/Grayland area. Could promote tourism, involve local schools and Grays Harbor College, and provide general public education.
- Support Doppler radar installation on the outer coast.
- Would like the sanctuary to assist with rockfish stock assessments. Current efforts are insufficient.
- Local knowledge from fishermen should be used to help develop sanctuary research.
- Monitoring oxygen levels is important, as well as early notification of low levels. Work with local fishermen to enhance early reporting.
- Want a year-round rescue tug available at Neah Bay.
- Westport/Grays Harbor area is important for increased tug services given increased ship traffic due associated with biodiesel plant; add rescue staging area in Grays Harbor for spill response (for tugs, boom, equipment, etc.)
- Investigate spill response resources available at La Push.
- Utilize local charter or commercial vessel operators for monitoring of baseline conditions. Create two-way communication process (e.g., email) to inform of changes in environmental conditions.
- Dead zones: O₂ levels effect crab, fish, and other habitat. Work with fishermen to improve knowledge, map affected areas, get information to/from fishermen.

- Sanctuary should have a hot line for reporting ocean issues, concerns, observations.

Group #3

Facilitator: John Barimo

Note-taker: Andy Palmer

- Recent marine debris cleanup efforts recently have not shown any debris from the commercial crab fishing. The sanctuary should give recognition to the voluntary efforts of the fishermen to reduce marine debris.
- The sanctuary should have a program to educate people to not throw debris overboard when on the water -- to improve awareness about the disposal of garbage.
- There is adequate fisheries regulation currently, so there is no need for additional regulations or another entity to add to what is currently working.
- The sanctuary should coordinate research and management efforts and share information with tribes, state agencies, local resource managers and other entities.
- The sanctuary should acknowledge that the sanctuary is not only a protected area but also where people make a living and an important economic source for local communities. This needs to be reflected better in the information published by the sanctuary.
- The sanctuary should utilize a bank of volunteers.
- The sanctuary should increase the educational outreach, not only with the website, but have people on the ground to interact face to face with communities. Schools are important, but there is a need to reach out to a wider population as well.
- There is a strong need to provide sanctuary data in a timelier manner and we need to identify the impediments that inhibit these reports from being produced and made available to other agencies and organizations.
- The sanctuary should continue to keep concern about oil development and oil spills as a high priority issue.
- There is more need for general information about the sanctuary that is more accessible to the public, not just limited to the web.
- The sanctuary itself should remain accessible to the public.
- Derelict gear is a term that fishermen don't like and lost gear is ultimately is retrieved. Retrieving gear is expensive but much of it can be brought back. The sanctuary should be a partner, along with the state and industry, in creating a program to retrieve this gear.
- The sanctuary should continue the participation with the annual coastal cleanup to support removing debris from wilderness beaches, perhaps to expand it – more beaches and more often.
- The sanctuary should be very proactive in the review of all permit proposals for wind and wave energy, aquaculture and oil drilling to ensure that the sanctuary resources are protected.
- Fisheries and the sanctuary can co-exist – it is not a negative thing, but a positive thing and this needs to be publicized.

Group #4

Facilitator: Jacqueline Laverdure

Note-taker: Liam Antrim

- Develop meaningful partnership with Olympic Coast Intergovernmental Policy Council.
- Work with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to develop stock assessment of fish, especially yelloweye and canary rockfish. Coast-wide biomass assessment (Mexico to WA) not representative of regional abundance.
- Like to see protection of traditional fishing (all species) at economically feasible and sustainable level.
- Concerned that the sanctuary area will grow and fishing will not be allowed in the future.
- Sanctuary should contribute, can take a lead with regional stock assessment to refine groundfish management.
- National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) science centers need help. Stock assessments are data poor. Sanctuary could have access to more resources to expand stock assessment efforts.
- Need to know more about fishery resources to manage them sustainably.
- Sanctuary should continue habitat mapping efforts. Get 'er done.
- Sanctuary should provide information and data to the Pacific Fisheries Management Council (PFMC) and in doing so respect the Council's process and knowledge base and expertise.
- Conduct and/or support those conducting analyses of existing data and identify data needs.
- Key data needs are oceanographic and biological processes, for example larval transport, sink locations, habitat requirements.
- Continue studies on ocean conditions on causes of oxygen depletion.
- Provide information to public so people understand the problem of low oxygen better.
- Fishery stock assessment studies should focus on species-habitat associations and depth preferences and differences in timing, tidal cycles, seasonal factors, etc. Stock assessments as now conducted do not accurately account for these preferences.
- Diversity of data sources would help to ground truth differences in results gained from different methods. Need to make sure data input into stock assessment models is reliable.
- Outreach programs should encompass Westport and Ilwaco; children and adults.
- The sanctuary is in unique position to review pitfalls and problems of marine reserve initiatives at California sanctuaries to avoid repeating mistakes. Sanctuary needs to work with all entities involved to develop common goals and objectives, work with PFMC, state, and tribes more effectively.
- Need to develop long-term monitoring and characterization program for marine resources within sanctuary utilizing ecosystem based management approach – full life cycle of organisms and habitat associations.

- Remotely-operated vehicles (ROVs) and other modern technologies should be used to improve stock assessment methods in conjunction with conventional techniques.
- Continue as good stewards of ocean including beach cleanups in partnership with state.
- Continue efforts for oil spill prevention.
- Honor original agreement from time of designation of sanctuary to stay out of fisheries management.
- Management of sanctuary should be based on the area/community needs not directives from Washington DC.